

Washington, DC- Today Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez introduced the “State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) Reimbursement Protection Act of 2005” as an amendment to the “Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act” (H.R. 4437) in the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives.

“The vast majority of immigrants that come to this country are law abiding and contribute greatly to our country. However, criminal aliens are a burden on our criminal justice system,” said Congresswoman Sánchez. “My amendment would increase funding for the SCAAP program to make sure that states and localities are paid back for the costs they incur with apprehending criminal aliens.”

Under Congresswoman Sánchez’ amendment the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses States and localities for criminal alien costs, would be authorized at \$1 billion annually for the next ten years. It would also change the SCAAP reimbursement formula so that states and localities are reimbursed for not only post-conviction costs associated with criminal aliens, which is covered in existing law, but also pre-conviction costs.

“Police officers in my district constantly tell me that criminal aliens are a drain on their resources, their manpower, and their budgets. They want to keep our communities safe but don’t have the resources to do it. My amendment would help fix that,” continued Sánchez.

SCAAP is a federal program that was enacted in 1994 to reimburse states and localities for their costs of incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens accused of convicted of state and local offenses. On average states spend over \$1 billion annually on costs for incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens. However, time and again the Bush Administration has rejected reimbursement of states and localities for such costs and Congress continues to underfund it.

“SCAAP has been proven to work in the last eleven years of its existence. Unfortunately it has been grossly underfunded by Congress at time when undocumented immigration is at a record high,” concluded Sánchez.

A decision by the Rules Committee whether to allow a vote on the House floor on this amendment is expected late Wednesday night.